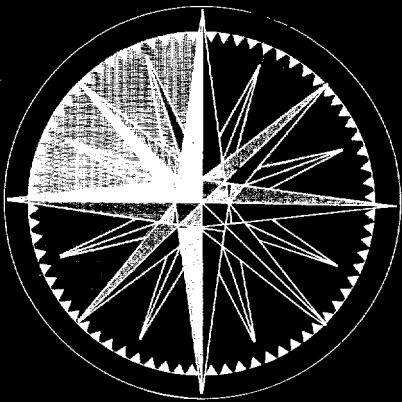


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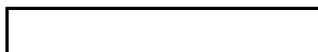
SPECIAL REPORT

OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

PROSPECTS OF THE GAULLIST PARTY IN FRANCE

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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PROSPECTS OF THE GAULLIST PARTY IN FRANCE

The Union for the New Republic (UNR), which emerged from the national elections in November 1958, was a loose political grouping of disparate elements, principally of the right. Its leading spokesmen were long-term associates of De Gaulle, and its wide appeal was based on confidence in the general as the only leader who could successfully break the Algerian impasse. Despite its expressed intention to carry on after De Gaulle, the UNR has not yet evolved a coherent party program or established an effective party organization. Since De Gaulle has kept policy formulation in the restricted coterie of his "technocrat" cabinet the UNR has been deprived of the opportunity of impressing itself on the country at large. Thus, if De Gaulle were to be removed from the scene in the next year or so, much of the support for his party would, in all likelihood, turn elsewhere. Should he continue as a leader over a more protracted period, the UNR might achieve a greater longevity. In any event, the party's future is contingent on its ability to hold its own against the old-line political parties by somehow convincing enough Frenchmen that, even without De Gaulle, it is the party most likely to keep France both prosperous and stable.

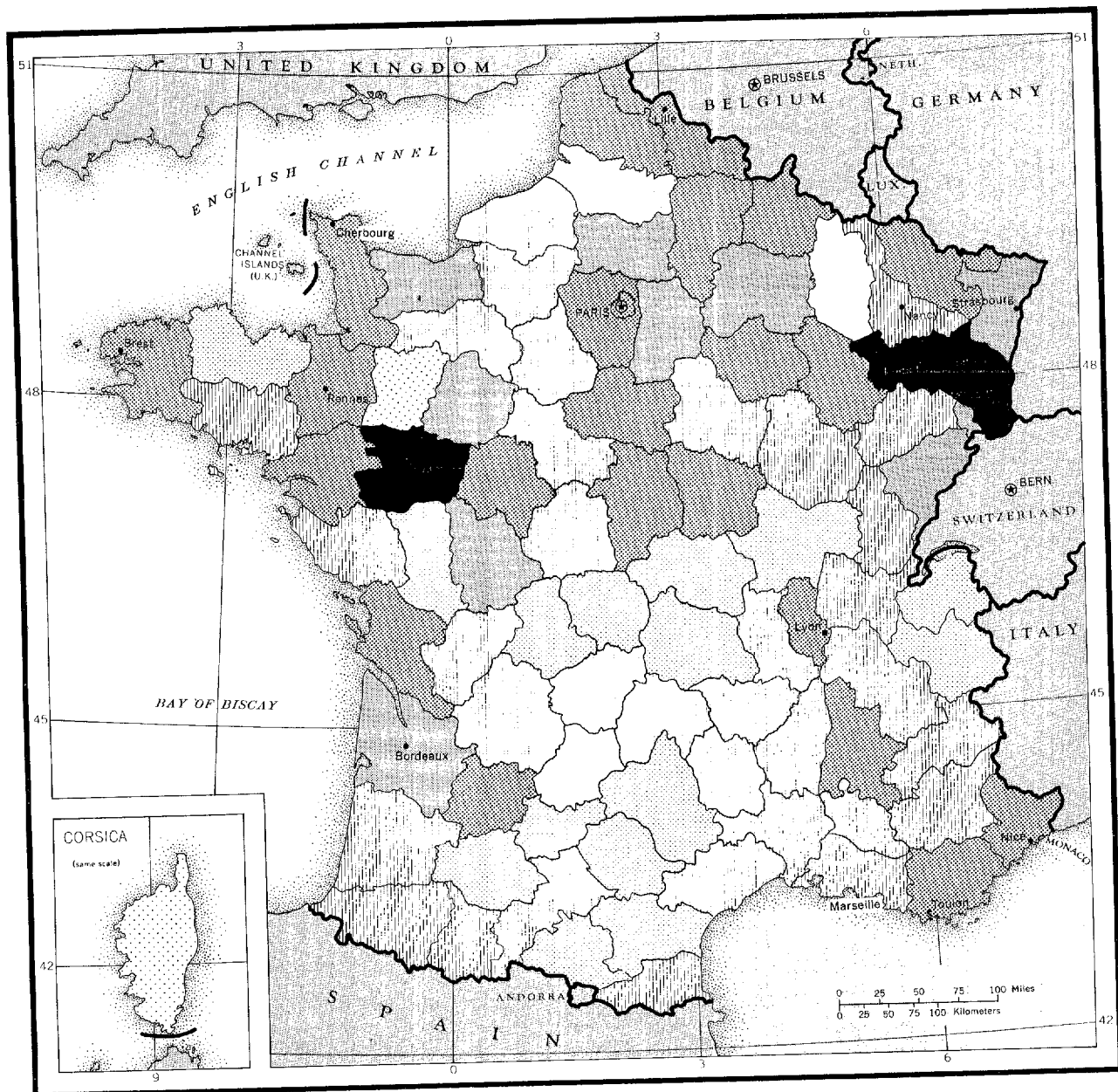
The UNR's Beginnings

The organization of the UNR was a second attempt to create a major Gaullist political party. Its predecessor, the Rally of the French People, (RPF) was established in 1947 in an attempt to force a revision of the constitution to provide for a stronger executive. The movement, openly supported by De Gaulle, had an auspicious beginning. It was unable, however, to achieve constitutional revision or to

undercut the established political parties of the day, and its drive for power fell short in the elections of 1951. Support for the RPF subsequently faded, and by 1956 it had broken up into a variety of small and ineffectual conservative party groups.

France, in 1958, was clearly headed for disaster. The threat to republican government posed by the Algerian predicament, an increasingly restless army, and the general

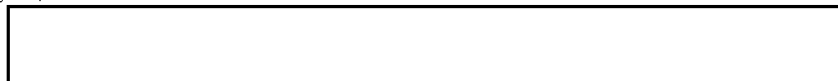
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FRANCE Distribution of Gaullist Vote in the 1962 Elections

Pro-Gaullist sentiment is marked in those areas where the population is engaged primarily in industrial and commercial pursuits and where the percentage of practicing Catholics is high.

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paralysis stemming from the endless squabbling among factious political parties called for a leader behind whom a majority of the nation could rally. It was to De Gaulle that France turned as the only acceptable alternative to an out-and-out military dictatorship. He won a sweeping preliminary endorsement in October 1958 when his new constitution, greatly strengthening the executive, was adopted in a plebescite by 79 percent of the voters.

De Gaulle tacitly encouraged the formation of a new Gaullist party, but because of his anticipated role as president of the republic, he did not personally identify himself with the UNR's fortunes. Nevertheless, it was generally understood that a vote for the UNR was a vote of confidence in De Gaulle. This was borne out in the November 1958 elections in which the UNR, exceeding its own expectations, won the largest single bloc of seats in the National Assembly, 189 out of 480.

In 1962 the UNR did even better. Campaigning exclusively on the "Gaullist record," the party carried 234 seats, giving it the most significant parliamentary victory in French republican history. Together with the pro-Gaullist deputies scattered among other parties, the UNR now commanded an absolute majority in the National Assembly.

Sources of Support

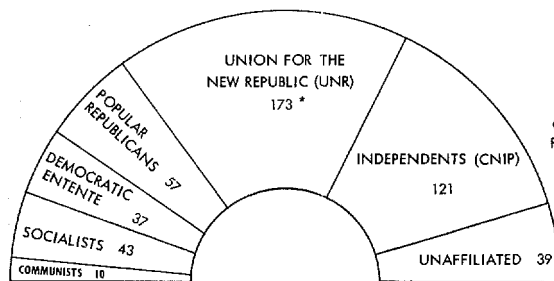
The returns of the 1962 elections showed that the UNR had the strong backing of the Catholics. Not only did the party do its best polling in areas where the percentage of practicing Catholics is high, but it also was probably the chief beneficiary of the heavy losses suffered by the conservative Independents and the center Catholic Popular Republicans. Several reasons have been advanced to explain this appeal to the Catholic voter, the chief ones being the UNR's advocacy of social progress in an atmosphere of conservatism, its willingness to go along with church-supported legislation, and De Gaulle's personal comportment as a devout Catholic.

The UNR also ran strongly in areas where there is a heavy concentration of business and commercial activity, particularly in those areas in which modernization of industry is most pronounced. The reason for this is quite clear: it is the notion that a Gaullist regime provides the best assurance of the internal stability that is prerequisite to thriving commerce. The continued favor of commercial interests could also mean that the Gaullists will one day represent the most modern and least traditionalized sectors of the French society. Support from this quarter, incidentally, provides the UNR with a useful

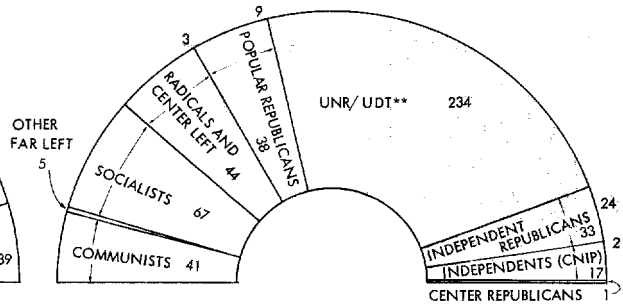
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Party Strengths In FRENCH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

DISSOLVED OCTOBER 1962



ELECTED NOVEMBER 1962

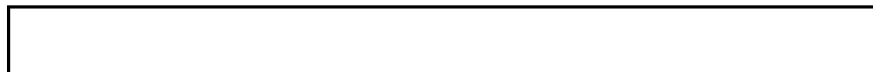


* After 16 defections, principally to the Independents, because of the granting of Algerian independence.

Committed to DeGaulle

** The UDT (Democratic Union of Labor) is the UNR's left-wing affiliate.

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source of revenue to finance its operations.

A third area in which the UNR did well was among the so-called "floating vote." This vote of about one million has, since the first years of the Fourth Republic, circulated through the political spectrum, sporadically coming to rest with the parties of protest--the Communists, the RPF, the Mendesists, the Poudjadists. In 1958 it apparently gravitated to the UNR in protest against the traditional party system. It stayed there in 1962, although the UNR was now the defender of the status quo.

From a longer range point of view, a significant source of continuing UNR strength is the considerable favor it seems to have won among young people. In the 1962 elections, according to the calculations of political analysts, if a person was under 35 years of age, there is a good chance he voted for the UNR. There is as yet no clear explanation for this trend, but perhaps a basic reason is a feeling that the UNR may be able to close a door on the past while opening another into the future. That is, to many Frenchmen the UNR may appear to offer an alternative to a recurrence of the political impotency that marked the Fourth Republic. It could also appeal to the youth as promoting circumstances in which individuals can reasonably expect to do better economically than their forebears. Another UNR attraction for young people may be the relative youth of UNR deputies; 34 of the 48 deputies who are under 40 years of age belong to the UNR.

A new development which is a potentially powerful asset to the UNR is the rapid growth of tele-

vision since 1958. Television and radio broadcast facilities are controlled by the government and were manipulated in the 1962 campaign to the advantage of the Gaullists. Thus, while very little time was made available to any one political party, many UNR candidates were strongly endorsed in the steady stream of government-sponsored programs that were put on the air at the time. The benefits accruing to the UNR since the elections, however, have been much more indirect, but only because the regime has not gone out of its way to play the UNR up as the government party.

The Party's Program

The UNR's program boils down to an undeviating endorsement of De Gaulle's main objectives, domestic and foreign. At home, it stands for the maintenance of political stability, continuing prosperity, and a modest program of social reform. Abroad, the UNR is pledged to back De Gaulle's efforts to place France in the front ranks of great nations, assert a position as the head of a loose federation of "European fatherlands," reduce its ties with NATO, and proceed with development of an independent nuclear capability. Through it all runs the theme that success depends on the perpetuation of strong executive-dominated government.

When it comes to specifics, the UNR program is, at best, vague. Much is being made of plans for "economic and social renewal," which in essence call for a maximum effort to expand the national economy, equitable distribution of the country's wealth, and a minimum of industrial strife.

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So far, only a beginning has been made in spelling out the details as to how all this is to be accomplished. This has taken the form of proposed legislation designed to deal with labor-management disputes by means of government-directed arbitration. As presently outlined, the system is intended to function in such a way that conflicts of interest would be detected in their early stages and resolved before they reached the point of developing into costly strikes. Granting this kind of authority to the government is such a touchy issue, however, that Premier Pompidou has felt compelled to reassure the nation that these developing plans would scrupulously adhere to democratic procedures and that the former corporate states of Fascist Italy or Nazi Germany are not what the UNR would hope to emulate.

The Party's Organization

The UNR has no formal party structure to speak of. In the absence of more than an embryonic party organization at the local level, the UNR has sought to make the most of the concept that it is a "transmission belt," i.e., the vehicle that carries the views of its followers to the government via its corps of representatives in the National Assembly. Not much of this has been heard since last spring, however, when the difficulties of

UNR deputies in getting a hearing for the grievances of striking coal miners gave rise to some derisive comment about the "slipping transmission belt."

The party's leadership is under no illusion that a strong position in a practically powerless parliament is an effective substitute for a good party machine. In casting about for ways and means of developing their party, they have looked to the US for a model. As early as 1958, the Gaullists began to use the American technique of gauging public sentiment by opinion polls as an indispensable aid to their strategy planning. In 1963, UNR leaders consulted with representatives of both major American parties to gain insight on how such parties are put together and how they go about cultivating and retaining mass support.

Up to now, Gaullist leaders have been only groping their way toward building an administrative and control mechanism at the grass-root level. On the basis of opinion polling, they have gone as far as concluding that the average Frenchman feels his interests are best served by the functional organization to which he belongs--labor unions, peasant organizations, student unions, etc.

This has led UNR leaders to urge the formation of regional

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committees for "economic and social action" to provide forums in which the views of these groups can be heard out. An example of what they appear to have in mind is regional groups composed of business and union leaders who would advise UNR planners on such matters as wages and contracts. For the present, not much thought seems to have been given to the possibility of promoting a ward-by-ward type of organization.

Problems of the UNR

Many of the problems confronting the UNR are readily apparent. Beholden as it is to one man, all too many of its followers find common ground only in their loyalty to De Gaulle. The party's program, still in the drafting stage, is ill-defined even in outline. Organizationally, it has no chain of command to the local level.

Chief among the other problems is the absence of an obvious successor to De Gaulle. Pompidou has done a creditable job as premier, but has not yet won the kind of confidence that would clearly stamp him as the heir apparent. Michel Debré, the faithful Gaullist wheel horse, is persona non grata with too many powerful political elements. Other UNR leaders, for one reason or another, have even less valid credentials.

If De Gaulle himself has a candidate in mind, he has given no hint as to his identity.

Another severe handicap plaguing the UNR is the fact that although it is technically the government party, it has only a very small hand in governing. This is clear from De Gaulle's high-handed government by plebiscite, his pre-emptiveness in making important decisions, his frequent failure to consult party leaders on less consequential matters, and his general disregard of parliamentary prerogatives.

In the same manner, the UNR as a party suffers from De Gaulle's reliance on government by "technocrats." That is, his penchant for giving greater weight to a person's technical qualifications than his party affiliation when it comes to making appointments to high office. Thus, in the French cabinet such vital portfolios as foreign affairs, defense, Algerian affairs and administrative reform have been given to "technocrats" rather than to representatives of the UNR.

There is, finally, the political opposition. Although the ability of the old-line political parties to interfere with the process of government has been effectively circumscribed for the time being, they

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continue to carp and harass at every opportunity. They still command a substantial following, and there are indications that some of them are increasingly inclined to work together. In addition, De Gaulle's brand of authoritarianism has generated a great deal of restlessness, if not downright hostility, among the intelligentsia which is being increasingly articulated, particularly in the press.

It seems inevitable that the brunt of these assaults will increasingly shift from De Gaulle to the UNR. Whether or not in such circumstances the UNR can avoid serious, perhaps fatal, inroads among its supporters remains to be seen.

Outlook

Much depends on whether De Gaulle decides to stand for election in 1965 for another seven-year term as president. There is no reason to believe that during a second term he would give the UNR any larger role in running the government than he has in the past. The party, however, will have that much more time to do what needs to be done if it is ever to stand on its own feet.

Fundamentally, this means solidifying its sprawling mass support. Of immediate impor-

tance is the need for a coherent program and for a tight administrative machine. In the final analysis, however, the question of whether the UNR will outlast De Gaulle will depend on whether enough Frenchmen can be convinced that the party, in itself, represents something new, if not revolutionary, on the French political scene.

To the UNR's advantage in this respect, is the fact that it is not bound by the sort of narrow ideological outlook that has stultified the old-line political parties. Divorced of such restrictive considerations, the UNR has the opportunity to emerge as the first political party in modern French history to base itself, like its American model, on a platform sufficiently broad to encompass elements of widely divergent interests and points of view. Moreover, its Gaullist connection gives it good ground to stake out a claim to being the party best able to provide the strong, executive-type government that will maintain stability and prosperity at home while, at the same time, upholding France's prestige abroad.

For all its talk and good intentions, however, the UNR leadership seems to be in no hurry to grasp the opportunity. Instead, there appears to be a tendency to bank on the hope

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that, after De Gaulle, a polarization of French political forces will occur in which most elements to the right of center-left will fall in behind the UNR. This, at least, is the line that some UNR spokesmen, pointing to the "tactical" electoral arrangements that had been worked out between Socialists and Communists against right-wing candidates, have been pushing since the 1962 elections. Lending encouragement to such thinking have been more recent manifestations that closer Socialist-Communist cooperation may be in prospect; Socialist leader Guy Mollet's statement last month that the two parties must "one day" merge their forces is a notable case in point.

Wittingly or not, De Gaulle may have in fact laid the legal groundwork for a

left-right polarization by amending the constitution to provide for a popularly elected president. Although the amendment's intent is to improve the chances of long-term political stability, its provision for a run-off between the two principal contenders is conducive to the division of political forces along lines that the UNR leaders anticipate.

On present form, however, the UNR's prospects seem bleak. Unless it constructs a more tangible organization and shows a more positive sense of direction than heretofore, the odds are that the UNR is in for gradual dissolution. The process would probably involve a combination of its present followers returning to their old voting habits or going along with any one of several splinter groups.

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